NOVA SCOTIA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

STATEMENT OF MANDATE (March 30, 2011)

2011-2012

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1. Message from the Minister and the Director and CEO

We are pleased to present the 2011-2012 Statement of Mandate for the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission (NSHRC). This plan sets out the NSHRC's strategic direction for the fiscal year.

The NSHRC's vision is to be a trusted leader, protector and promoter of human rights in Nova Scotia by strengthening our relationships with government and the public. These relationships will enable the NSHRC to more effectively deliver its dual mandate: human rights dispute resolution, and eliminating barriers to full participation in society through education, training and consultation, including policy advice.

In the 2011-2012 fiscal year, the NSHRC is poised to make significant improvements to all stages of our dispute resolution process. Client consultations and research carried out in 2010-2011 will guide these improvements, with dispute resolution being more timely, flexible and transparent by the end of the period.

Recognizing the importance of preventing discrimination, the NSHRC continues to promote human rights education and training by targeting communities and providing information on human rights. The NSHRC provides ongoing assistance and advice to organizations and business, exploring diversity in the workplace and preventing discriminatory practices.

The NSHRC will continue to make the best possible use of its human and financial resources in support of government's priority of getting back to balance and living within our means. Effective use of our resources will ensure our common vision of a society characterized by equality and social diversity.

The NSHRC is a continuously learning organization, and strives towards excellence in human rights. We are committed to working with all Nova Scotians to assist them in becoming full participants and contributors to a vibrant, prosperous and diverse community.

In 2011-2012, there will be a significant change as the CEO will be leaving the Commission at the expiration of her term on May 1, 2011. With the appointment of a new CEO, the direction and commitments for the NSHRC in 2011-2012 may require adjustment.

Honourable Ross Landry
Minister Responsible for the Nova Scotia *Human Rights Act*

Krista Daley, Director and CEO, Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission

2. Mandate

The NSHRC has a unique role within Nova Scotia. It is an independent government agency charged with administering the Nova Scotia *Human Rights Act*, a provincial statute created in 1969, with the most recent amendments in July 2009. The NSHRC has a dual mandate - human rights dispute resolution and eliminating barriers to full participation in society through education, training and consultation, including policy advice.

The specific duties of the NSHRC are set out in the Act as follows:

- administer and enforce the provisions of this Act;
- develop a program of public information and education in the field of human rights to forward the principle that every person is free and equal in dignity and rights without regard to race, religion, creed, colour, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender or sexual orientation;
- conduct research and encourage research by universities and other bodies in the general field of human rights;
- advise and assist government departments and co-ordinate their activities as far as these activities concern human rights;
- advise the government on suggestions, recommendations and requests made by private organizations and individuals;
- co-operate with and assist any person, organization or body concerned with human rights, inside or outside the province;
- report as required by the Minister on the business and activities of the Commission;
- consider, investigate or administer any matter or activity referred to the Commission by the Governor in Council or the Minister.

Vision

The NSHRC is a trusted leader, protector and promoter of human rights. Through sharing its knowledge and engaging Nova Scotians in discussion on human rights issues, the NSHRC is committed to affirming and promoting human rights.

Strategic Goals

The NSHRC's work is characterized by its determination to:

1. Continue to promote a workplace that is dynamic, embraces differences and fosters continuous learning.
2. Provide fair, easily accessible and cost-effective services in accordance with the NS *Human Rights Act*.
3. Engage with racially visible people, women, Aboriginal people and persons with disabilities to ensure their realities are reflected and celebrated in the work of the NSHRC.
4. Strengthen existing partnerships while collaborating with organizations which share similar values to reduce systemic discrimination and strengthen the ability of individuals and communities to address issues of discrimination.
5. Advise and assist the government of Nova Scotia in its goal of achieving equitable access to opportunities and services for every individual.
6. Ensure people in all communities of Nova Scotia are engaged in

meaningful discussion on human rights issues and diversity, to improve the lives of all Nova Scotians.

3. Government Priorities (as appropriate for an independent agency)

Although it is an independent agency with a clearly defined statutory mandate, the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission helps the government to achieve its three priorities in the following ways:

Priority 1 - Get back to balance and ensure government lives within its means

- The Commission will make the most effective use of its financial and human resources.
- Streamlined dispute resolution processes will allow respondents, including government departments and agencies, to efficiently participate in resolution activities.
- The Commission will continue to forego charging other government departments for providing human rights education and training on the basis that there is a needless use of administrative processing expenses for this type of charging between departments.

Priority 2 - Make health care better for you and your family

- Through its dispute resolution process, the Commission will help ensure health care services are provided fairly and equitably, without regard to personal characteristics of the client.
- Promoting respect for human rights in the healthcare workers' workplaces will provide better health care delivery for patients.

Priority 3 - Create good jobs and grow the economy

- Nearly 80 percent of Commission dispute resolution efforts are related to employment. The Commission will continue to work towards achieving a diverse and inclusive work force across Nova Scotia, which means a larger, more qualified workforce pool (that is, eliminating discrimination will allow for groups who are historically under-represented in the workforce to become properly represented).
- Respect for human rights creates a better workplace culture, creating more productive employees, in turn creating economic growth.

4. Performance Measures

Access to fair and effective processes					
OUTCOME	**MEASURE**	**DATA** **Base Year** **2008-09**	**TARGET** **March 2012**	**TRENDS**	**STRATEGIC ACTIONS**
Dispute Resolution processes are fair, effective accessible	Average time to finalize a case at the intake stage (upon receipt of an Intake Questionnaire)	6 mos	2 mos	8 mos (at Jan 31/11)	• Complete review of intake function and implement changes to reduce file time at intake • Stabilize staffing levels on the intake team to improve output
	Average time to finalize an investigation	N/A	20 mos	21.4 mos (at Jan 31/11, from time of referral by intake)	• Complete review of investigation policies and procedures, and implement improvements. • Improve use of Section 29(4) dispositions for early resolution • Implement administrative support role for investigation function once vacant administrative role is filled.

Access to a fair and (cost) effective process					
OUTCOME	**MEASURE**	**DATA** **Base Year** **2009-10**	**TARGET** **March 2011**	**TRENDS**	**STRATEGIC ACTIONS**
	Average time to finalize mediation from point of referral to final approval of settlement agreement	6.5 mos	6 mos	5 mos (at Jan 31/11)	• Implement new mediation model • Support Human Rights Officers to incorporate new mediation model into their practice
	Average time to finalize settlement follow-up (training, policy review, etc.)	12 mos	11 mos	11 mos (at Jan 31/10)	Develop strategy to enhance: • Case management using computerized system • Reporting on time frame for completion of follow-up
	% of Boards of Inquiry (BOI) that resolve prior to a BOI decision being rendered	57%	60%	N/A*	• Reduce the number of disputes that result in a hearing by initiating settlement
	Average amount of time (months) after referral to a BOI to resolve the complaint (settled or adjudicated)	11 months	10 months	N/A	• Initiate settlement at the earliest possible moment • If necessary, NSHRC initiates contact with Chair to arrange hearing dates as soon as appointment is finalized

Better informed public on indicators and impact of discrimination					
OUTCOME	**MEASURE**	**DATA** **Base Year** **2008-09**	**TARGET** **March 2011**	**TRENDS**	**STRATEGIC ACTIONS**
The public is better informed about indicators and impact of discrimination	Number of voluntary requests for products and services	75% Consult 60% Training	85% Consult 75% Train	83% Consult 65% Train (at Jan 31/11)	• Develop a plan to promote our products to new clients • Develop a strategy to manage increased requests including partnering with other agencies
	Number of sustainable strategic partners	2	5	4 (at Jan 31/11)	• Seek new partners for collaboration on human rights events • Increase workshops on areas of discrimination other than employment (residence, service provision, volunteers, etc.) • Continue to improve current partnerships • Build capacity by partnering with community agencies in delivery of workshops and education sessions

Access to a fair and (cost) effective process					
OUTCOME	**MEASURE**	**DATA** **Base Year** **2009-10**	**TARGET** **March 2011**	**TRENDS**	**STRATEGIC ACTIONS**
Processes for addressing disputes are fair and cost effective	Average costs per mediation case	N/A	20% reduction from 2010	Permanent staff now also mediating files, skewing cost of per-mediation data	• This measure is being eliminated to reflect the fact that mediation is now also carried out by Human Rights Officers, whose costs are fixed. Maximum billable hours for roster mediators will remain in place.
	Average costs **per day** for BOI	N/A	10%		• Explore more cost-effective space for BOI hearings • Use oral recording systems rather than transcription services

***N/A - Not available**

5. Budget Context and Budget

Budget Context

Budget

Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission			
	2010-2011 Estimate ($ thousands)	2011-2012 Forecast ($ thousands)	2011-2012 Estimate ($ thousands)
Gross Departmental Expenses:	2,200	2,143	2,125